

**ANG****Bayan**

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Editorial

Build up strength for a decisive battle against the regime

There is absolutely no indication that Gloria Arroyo will leave Malacañang after her present term. All her current moves are reflective of her insatiable thirst for power and geared towards ensuring her continued reign. But in the final reckoning, she will be thwarted by the struggling people.

Arroyo has been frenziedly maneuvering to deceive the people and in the process divert hefty sums to finance her schemes to hang on to power. She is laying the ground for the intensification of the fascist repression of the anti-Arroyo movement that is now resurgent and expected to grow further in strength.

Every day, Arroyo and her ilk conjure new schemes ostensibly to benefit the impoverished masses. In reality, these ploys merely serve to promote her selfish interests and to prolong her and her cabal's hold on power. They are nothing but chicaneries to make Malacañang appear supportive of the masses who are in the throes of poverty. Arroyo simply pockets the bulk of billions of pesos from the "Katas ng VAT" and other resources earmarked for "subsidies", as her clique did in the "fertilizer fund" scam and similar other funds in the past.

As testament to the numer-

ous deceptions Arroyo is preparing for, she recently appointed her faithful crony Romulo Neri as head of the Social Security System (SSS) and the National Social Welfare Program (NSWP). Neri has proven time and again that Arroyo's secrets will "stay with him to the grave", thus, his appointment to these agencies, which are being eyed as sources of bigger funds for the unrestrained disposal of his boss.

But Arroyo knows too well how intensely the masses loathe her and that she can never hoodwink the people with her lies. The masses are deeply aware



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that Arroyo's "subsidies" are so designed to deceive them by placating their anger and veering them away from the path of ardent struggle, and pave the way for Arroyo and her minions to further plunder the nation's coffers and cling to power. These deceptions only lead the people to more determinedly wage a tireless struggle to terminate Arroyo's rule.

Fearing that the outraged people may gather enough strength to go against her, she is scrambling to come up with more ways to systematically use her security operatives and the military to counter the people's mounting resistance. Her goal is to eliminate all barriers to her continued rule. For her, mobilizing the military would be the best solution once the crisis worsens, her lies and deceptions fall flat, and the people's rage and struggle escalate.

Arroyo has issued Executive Order 731 ordering the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP) to monitor the security situation amid the worsening socio-economic crisis that she herself aggravates. Arroyo signed the order on June 7 but an-

nounced it to the public only on July 11, after numerous and successive protest actions had erupted in different campuses in Metro Manila and at the offices of oil companies.

Through Arroyo's new order, we can expect military intelligence agencies to step up surveillance operations in schools, factories, offices, communities and other areas in the cities and countryside. Arroyo's minimum objective is to terrorize the people and their progressive leaders and activists to desist from waging mass actions that air the people's grievances against endless oil price hikes, atrociously low wages, unabated tuition fee increases, worsening poverty and her continuous reign.

Arroyo will also surely use her military agents to conduct surveillance operations against church people, lawyers, businessmen, media workers, critics within the military, and even officers of the court and other government agencies such as the Commission on Human Rights who sympathize with the people in their fight against Arroyo's rotten and fascist policies.

ISAFP's task of monitoring the

current crisis reinforces previous orders deploying Philippine Army soldiers in Metro Manila communities where progressive organizations are active and people's protest movements are strong.


If needed, Arroyo will also utilize her security forces and the military to perpetrate both overt and covert acts of violence against anyone opposed to her regime.

Arroyo's intense deceptions and repression of the people constitute her ultimate weapon in her obstinate refusal to surrender power. Immediately ending the Arroyo clique's rotten, oppressive and despotic rule is contingent on the people's decisive action. The masses and their organizations should focus attention and efforts on organizing and mustering their unified strength, courage and determination to resolutely fight the Arroyo regime.

In the face of intense repression, the masses and activists should redouble their creativity, boldness and perseverance to effectively fight the regime's sinister attempts to crush their struggles. They should utilize all possible means to expose and condemn all cases of repression and increase the level of the people's militancy and resistance.

Alongside such efforts, the armed revolutionary forces should further intensify people's war. They should conduct tactical offensives across the archipelago more often to diminish the enemy's capacity to suppress the democratic struggles of the people and its support to the moribund regime that clings like a leech to power. Every victorious tactical offensive metes punishment on the Arroyo regime for all its crimes against the people. Every successful tactical offensive supports the masses in their struggle to finally put an end to Gloria Arroyo's rule.

AB

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Militants condemn Neri appointment to SSS

Gloria Arroyo earned numerous criticisms in her recent move to appoint Romulo Neri as the new administrator of the Social Security System (SSS) effective August 1 and new chairman of the National Social Welfare Program (NSWP). According to Bayan Muna, Neri's new post is his "reward" for keeping mum on the anomalous NBN-ZTE deal.

The SSS employees' union likewise assailed Neri's appointment and the regime's bullying of outgoing SSS administrator Corazon dela Paz. The regime has long been pressuring Dela Paz to quit her post. Her illness these past months later became a convenient excuse for her eventual resignation. Union members say Arroyo has been putting the heat on Dela Paz after the latter refused Arroyo's demand to use SSS funds for her so-called "education subsidy" program. Dela Paz also disallowed the utilization of pension funds to push the national ID system. The regime wasted no time removing Dela Paz while she was abroad for medical treatment in June.

As soon as Dela Paz relinquished her post and even before Neri's succession, Arroyo hurriedly issued Administrative Order 232 (AO 232) that promoted the SSS president to Cabinet rank and made him automatic head of the NSWP.

AO 232 went public only 10 days before the official announcement of Neri's appointment to the SSS.

The union warned that they would keep a vigilant watch over all moves by Neri in the SSS. SSS employees led by their union had in the past succeeded in ousting an SSS president and it would not be farfetched for them to do it again.

Democratic organizations, especially the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), support the the SSS union's vigilance. Like other private sector workers, a big number of KMU members pay monthly contributions to the SSS.

SSS employees and the people are aware that Neri's appointment to the agency and the NSWP is only a scheme to facilitate Arroyo's access to their funds. Arroyo plans to use the NSWP to channel funds from the SSS, Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), Department of Social Welfare and Development and Department of Health.

Aside from Arroyo's numerous manipulations through Neri to enable her to use over P248 billion of SSS funds, she will be able to plunder close to P45 billion of NSWP funds, just as she did the "fertilizer fund" and other "subsidy funds" of Malacañang. The regime will use the NSWP funds to satiate itself, buy the loyalty of its minions and local officials especially in the coming elections and give out "subsidies" in its token anti-poverty programs.

Just last July 15, Arroyo announced the allocation of an additional P4 billion for her regime's "Katas ng VAT" program. The amount includes P1 billion in dole-outs for "power subsidies" to life-line consumers using up to 100 kWh of electricity outside of Metro Manila; P1 billion "livelihood loans" for spouses or family members of public vehicle operators and drivers; and P500 million in "assistance" to seniors aged 75 and older who are not SSS beneficiaries or GSIS pensioners. Another P1 billion has been purportedly earmarked for the rehabilitation of infrastructure destroyed by typhoon "Frank."

AB

Response to incessant oil price hikes

Relentless protest actions

Successive protest actions have been launched in the past few days, especially by the youth, to oppose unabated increases in the prices of petroleum products and the Arroyo regime's pigheaded refusal to remove the VAT imposed on these commodities.

Mounting youth protest actions. Close to 5,000 students and out-of-school youth marched towards the historic Mendiola Bridge (now the Don Chino Roces Bridge) on July 18. With the theme "Youth and people, mount an uprising,"

thousands of students from various schools walked out of their classes to join the protest march. The protesters demanded the scrapping of the value added tax (VAT) on oil, the repeal of the Oil Deregulation Law, and the approval of a legislat-

ed P125 across-the-board wage increase.

Police forces had already positioned themselves within the vicinity of Mendiola Bridge in anticipation of the protesters. Foiled, the demonstrators proceeded to the Mehan Garden where they held their rally. The program was marked with street plays, songs and alternative street classes where ac-

tivists studied the rotten Philippine social system.

Protest actions led by students were also held in universities in the cities of Baguio, Cebu and Davao and the provinces of Negros Occidental and Negros Oriental. In Baguio City, close to a thousand students wearing red shirts trooped to the streets, managing to gather in Malcolm Square despite heavy rains and three attempts by the police to block them at Session Road and Magsaysay Avenue.

This demonstration was the second large protest action initiated by the youth in ten days. On July 10, declared National Youth Action Day, thousands of students walked out of their classes led by the Youth for Truth and Accountability Now (Youth Act Now) and its member organizations such as Anakbayan, League of Filipino Students, Student Christian Movement, Kabataang Pinoy, Youth Revolt, National Union of Students in the Philippines and College Editors Guild of the Philippines.

Thousands of students at the University of the Philippines, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Philippine Christian University and Adamson University also joined the protest. Also among the protesters were students from Ateneo de Manila, De La Salle University and University of Santo Tomas, Jose Rizal University, Lyceum of the Philippines, University of the East-Manila as well as high school students from Sauyo, Culiati and Quirino High Schools. They held programs and similar activities in their schools before they converged at España Avenue in Manila and marched towards Mendiola Bridge. Other students, on the other hand, gathered in front of the University of Santo Tomas in España where they burned an effigy of Arroyo as the culmina-

tion of their program.

Blocked by the police, the student contingent originally headed towards Mendiola instead conducted a program along Morayta Avenue.

On July 3, about 3,000 students of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) walked out of their classes and marched towards Mendiola. A week earlier, the PUP administration gave in to the students' demands to refund the P250 "developmental fee" collected from them, following a protest march staged by almost 2,000 students in front of the office of the Commission on Higher Education in Pasig City.

Raging protests at the offices of oil firms. Successive protests were launched by workers and various sectors in front of oil company buildings to demonstrate the people's extreme hatred of the ceaseless increases in the prices of oil products.

Members of progressive organizations led by the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) stormed and barricaded the office of Pilipinas Shell in Valero Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City. The protest action was also joined by members of Anakbayan, Kilusang Mayo Uno, Migrante and other groups. They hurled paint bombs and sprayed protest messages like "Oust Gloria" and "No to oil price hikes" on the walls of the

Shell building. Outnumbered by activists, the Shell security guards failed to stop them. The protest lasted for a few minutes.

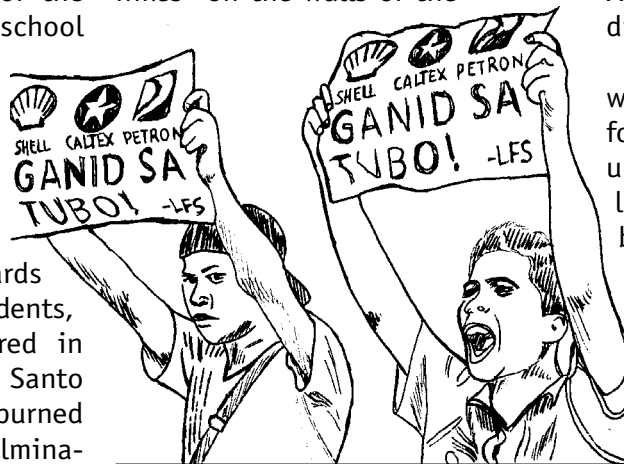
Meanwhile, on July 11, students led by Anakbayan trooped to the main office of Petron Corporation in Gil Puyat Avenue in Makati City. Their main grievance was the suffering endured by their parents in their effort to cope with the ever increasing prices of commodities stemming from the incessant price increases of petroleum products.

On July 5, BAYAN members pelted with tomatoes the Pilipinas Shell office in Makati City to oppose the latest round of oil price increases that day.

Growing protests across the nation. An 18-day protest caravan headed by Anakbayan-Southern Tagalog from Los Baños, Laguna was launched on July 11. Among the protesters were the Southern Tagalog Cultural Network and other youth organizations. The caravan assailed the high costs of tuition fees, petroleum products and commodities such as rice.

The caravan is set to pass through various towns of Rizal, Quezon and Batangas to encourage more youth to join the protest. It is set to culminate in Quezon City on July 28, where participants will join other organizations in a huge protest rally on the day of Gloria Arroyo's State of the Nation Address.

Meanwhile, a signature drive was launched this month calling for the scrapping of the Oil Deregulation Law and the VAT on petroleum products. The petition has been making the rounds of jeepney and tricycle stations and other public places. In Legazpi City, a weekly noise barrage has been launched by progressive organizations denouncing relentlessly rising fuel prices. AB





NPA seizes 12 firearms in Davao del Sur raid

Twelve firearms were confiscated in a raid in July by the New People's Army (NPA) on a giant mining company in Davao del Sur. Earlier, a policeman was killed and eight others were wounded in five tactical offensives staged by the NPA across the archipelago this month.

July 19, midnight. An NPA platoon stormed a drilling site of Sagittarius Mines in Sitio Datal Ngabong, Barangay Kimlawis, Kiblawan, Davao del Sur and disarmed the company guards. The guerrillas seized 10 shotguns, an M1 Garand rifle and a .38 caliber revolver.

Twelve hours after the attack, two soldiers belonging to the 1002nd Brigade platoon were wounded in a clash with Red fighters in Malita town. There were no reported casualties on the NPA side.

July 14, 8:30 a.m. A policeman was killed and two others were wounded in an assault by Red fighters on a police detachment in Sitio Nalibistan, Barangay Dumagdang, Labo, Camarines Norte.

July 13, 11:00 a.m. Two enemy troopers on patrol belonging to the Philippine Army (PA) 1001st Brigade were wounded after being hit by a land mine detonated by Red guerrillas in Barangay New Leyte, Maco, Compostela Valley.

July 11. A government soldier was wounded in an encounter between patrolling elements of the PA 61st IB and Red fighters in Barangay Pinggot, Ilog, Negros Occidental.

That same day, another government soldier was wounded in a raid launched by Red guerrillas on a detachment of the 42nd Division Reconnaissance Company in Barangay Katipunan, Veruela, Agusan del Sur.

Meanwhile, according to the latest reports received by *Ang Bayan*, Red fighters seized 18 firearms in an assault on a police station in Banay-Banay, Davao Oriental on July 3. *AB* had earlier reported the seizure of nine firearms. **AB**

OBL2 sustains continuous losses in Samar

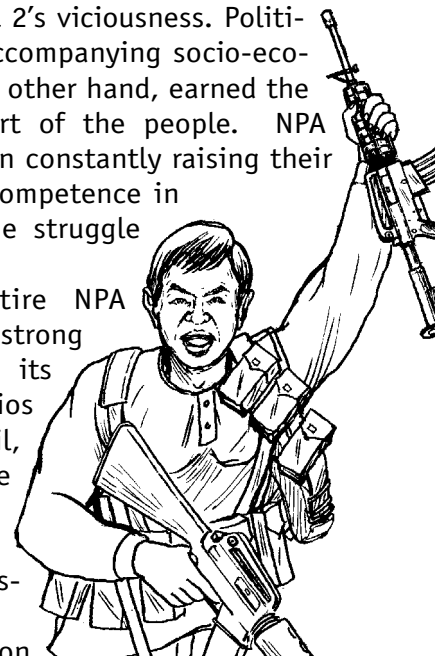
The Arroyo regime's Oplan Bantay Laya 2 (OBL2) has failed miserably in its objective to crush the revolutionary movement in Samar, its main target in the Eastern Visayas region this year. The 8th Infantry Division of the Philippine Army has done nothing but issue press releases regarding its alleged victories against the New People's Army (NPA). In fact, it is the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) that continues to sustain mounting casualties. It has likewise failed to dismantle even a single NPA unit in the island.

In the seven-month period covering January to July, no less than 43 government soldiers were killed in tactical offensives staged by Red guerrillas in the island, according to preliminary reports. On the other hand, three valiant Red fighters were martyred in the same period. Even over a longer time frame, from 2005 to April 2008, the NPA suffered only nine casualties while the enemy soldiers had a total of 129 deaths, making the ratio 1:14.

In the political realm, the Arroyo regime and the AFP have increasingly isolated themselves from the people as a result of OBL 2's viciousness. Political repression and the accompanying socio-economic crisis have, on the other hand, earned the NPA the growing support of the people. NPA forces in Samar have been constantly raising their military capability and competence in expansion work amid the struggle against OBL2.

Meanwhile, the entire NPA force in Leyte stands strong and has even expanded its operations to 14 barrios and four towns as of April, contrary to claims by the Philippine Army 8th ID that it has routed the NPA guerrillas in the island.

NPA Red fighters are on the right track in Eastern Visayas not only in defeating the OBL2 but in escalating guerrilla warfare to support the people's struggle to put an end to the fascist, corrupt and puppet Arroyo regime. **AB**





NPA tactical offensives jolt Arroyo visit to Masbate

A number of tactical offensives confronted Gloria Arroyo as she visited Masbate for a meeting with her cabinet officials on July 15.

NPA fighters ambushed troops of the 9th ID conducting patrols in Barangay Villafuerte, Uson at around 10 a.m., killing an Army sergeant and wounding another government trooper. The ambush was staged in an area where Vice President Noli de Castro and other cabinet members were to pass through on their way to Placer town, near the venue where Arroyo was to conduct her meeting. The Cabinet members were forced to abandon the land route and instead boarded six helicopters to be able to attend the meeting.

Meanwhile, two more enemy troops were wounded in an ambush conducted by Red guerrillas on Philippine Army and CAFGU elements in Barangay Managanaga, Mandaon before 4 p.m.

To avoid humiliation, the Philippine Army fabricated intelligence reports stating that as early as June 27, the NPA leadership in Eastern Visayas had sent over 200 Red fighters to Masbate to reinforce NPA guerrillas in the island—obviously contradicting earlier claims by the AFP that it had crushed the NPA forces in Leyte and Samar. (See *related article*)

The AFP had deployed an additional 400 soldiers to the original 120 military troopers assigned to the island before Arroyo's visit. Despite such reinforcements, the NPA still succeeded in launching tactical offensives.

The tactical offensives served as punishment to Arroyo for aggravating the plight of the impoverished masses, said National Democratic Front-Bicol spokesperson Greg Bañares. **AB**

Series of tactical offensives in Eastern Visayas

Successive tactical offensives in Eastern Visayas these past months belie declarations by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) that it has decimated the revolutionary movement in the region. Various reports received by *Ang Bayan (AB)* indicate that from January to July, the NPA seized 13 high-powered firearms, aside from other military equipment.

Following is a list of tactical offensives in the three Samar provinces for the period that have not been reported previously in *AB*:

NPA fighters under the Rodante Urtal Command nearly wiped out a squad of the 20th IB in an ambush staged in Kilometer 11, Barangay Happy Valley, San Isidro, Northern Samar on July 7. More than five enemy soldiers were killed while the rest of the squad were seriously wounded. The Red fighters seized two M16 armalite rifles, close to 300 rounds of ammunition, seven backpacks, a GPS receiver and other military equipment. There was no casualty on the NPA side.

The 20th IB is responsible for terrorizing and summarily executing suspected NPA members and sympathizers in the villages of Catarman, Lope de Vega, San Isidro and other towns.

On July 3, two elements of the 34th IB were wounded in a sniping operation conducted by Red fighters of the Jovito Ragay Command in Barangay Buluan, Calbiga, Samar. An Army trooper belonging to the 46th IB was killed in a successful harassment operation by Red guerrillas in Barangay Caguisipan, Catbalogan, Samar on June 10.

In Motiong, Samar, a government soldier was killed and another one was wounded in an encounter between Red fighters of the Arnulfo Ortiz Command and a platoon under the 46th IB in Barangay Sto. Niño on May 17. Two M17 armalite rifles were seized by the Red fighters. There was no casualty on the NPA side.

A government trooper belonging to the 453rd Engineering Construction Brigade was killed in an ambush by Red fighters of the Silvio Pajares Command on May 17 in Batangay Imelda, Lapi-nig, Northern Samar.

Red fighters of the Efren Martires Command and Arnulfo Ortiz Command harassed the 46th IB Alpha Company headquarters in Barangay Calapi, Motiong, Samar on April 24 in a 20-minute fire-fight. Meanwhile, on April 12, a unit of the Rodante Urtal Command harassed the 52nd IB company headquarters in Barangay Salvacion, San Isidro, Northern Samar, causing the enemy an undetermined number of casualties.

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Military holds Gumanoy sisters hostage

The mother of two young women abducted by the military belied claims by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) that her daughters willingly sought sanctuary with the AFP.

Mrs. Maria Gumanoy insisted that her daughters Rose Ann, 21 and Fatima, 17 were abducted and subjected by the military to intense torture and psychological pressure. Mrs. Gumanoy is the widow of Eduardo "Eddie" Gumanoy, a peasant leader from Southern Tagalog who was abducted and murdered by a "death squad" under then Col. Jovito Palparan in April 2003.

The Gumanoy sisters were kidnapped by the military on July 3 while they were on their way to meet their mother in Alabang,

Muntinlupa. Rose Ann was still nursing bullet wounds in her arm and was then under the custody of the human rights watchdog Karapatan after she was released on bail on May 29. She had earlier been under military custody after her capture in an alleged encounter between the AFP and NPA on April 15.

By the afternoon of July 3, Rose Ann sent a text message to her mother saying that they were being tailed. As soon as the military ab-



ducted the two girls within the vicinity of Alabang at around 4 p.m., Rose Ann was able to send another text message to her mother saying that they were being brought to a military camp.

The following morning, Mrs. Gumanoy and members of Karapatan-Southern Tagalog went looking for

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Two government soldiers were killed in harassment and sniping operations launched by the Nida Cantong Command against operating troops of the 20th IB on April 12 in Barangay San Julian, Catarman, Northern Samar.

On March 24, about 30 Red fighters of the Lopito Mengote Command frustrated a raid by over 50 operating troops of the 14th IB Bravo Company in Barangay Cagtoog, Oras, Eastern Samar, killing eight soldiers. The NPA fighters, who were able to fire the first shot, later received reinforcements from another Red guerrilla unit in the vicinity. A Red fighter was martyred in the firefight that lasted for one and a half hours.

On the other hand, Dexter Muros, an ex-lieutenant of the 14th IB, was killed in an operation staged by the Sergio Lobina Com-

mand on March 23, in Oras, Eastern Samar. Muros was active in enemy operations and was involved in killing and torturing a number of civilians. On March 20, a government trooper was killed and another one was wounded when Red fighters of the Serafin Pasimos Command sniped a squad of the 46th IB in San Jorge, Samar.

The Arnulfo Ortiz Command ambushed on March 3 a squad of the 46th IB in Barangay Maypange, Motiong, Samar. Four soldiers were killed and three others were wounded including the unit commander Lt. Leonard Orbase. Three M16s, an M14, and two short firearms were confiscated by the NPA.

On February 11, Red fighters of the Arnulfo Ortiz Command sniped a squad of the Alpha Coy, 46th IB in Barangay Malubago, Motiong, Samar that was then launching RSOT operations in the area. The

military elements were asleep in a house with no civilian companion when they were fired upon. An enemy soldier was wounded at the back. The frightened government troopers left that very night and forced the villagers to evacuate to use them as human shields.

Six government soldiers were killed in an ambush by Red fighters of the Arnulfo Ortiz Command on February 9 in Villareal, Samar. On February 5, Red guerrillas of the Serafin Pasimos Command sniped a squad of the 46th IB Alpha Coy in Barangay Mabo-ob, San Jorge, Samar. An enemy trooper was killed while another one was wounded.

On January 12, Red fighters of the Rogelio Bantilo Command disarmed the barangay captain of Magtuad village in Catubig, Northern Samar of an M1 Garand. The village chief was on the payroll of a politician.

AB



the two young women at the office of the Intelligence Service of the AFP (ISAFP). The military denied having them in its custody. Later in the evening, however, the Philippine Army spokesperson admitted that the Gumanoy sisters were in Fort Bonifacio.

When Mrs. Gumanoy went to the military camp the following morning to see her daughters, she was brought to the Fort Bonifacio hospital where the allegedly ailing Fatima was being treated, guarded by two female soldiers. Upon learning that her mother had arrived to fetch her, Fatima began packing her things and got ready to leave when an unidentified doctor pulled her back and said that she could not leave just yet because she was allegedly suffering from a urinary tract infection. The same doctor also prohibited Mrs. Gumanoy from transferring Fatima to another hospital or to be examined by another doctor of the family's choice.

When Mrs. Gumanoy returned the next day, she was shocked to see Fatima bedridden and pale, with bluish lips and rashes all over her body. She was suffering from "allergies", said the attending doctor, although the military claimed later in an official statement that she was suffering from German measles. Mrs. Gumanoy feared that the military had administered several drugs to her daughter.

Worse, Mrs. Gumanoy saw with her own eyes how her daughters were being coerced into signing a document stating that they willingly remained under military custody. Mrs. Gumanoy recounted that although the two girls did not shed tears, she could see that they were

terrified. Fatima and Rose Ann refused to sign the document. Mrs. Gumanoy, in between sobs, belied the AFP's statements that the three of them were allowed to talk freely



with each other in the hospital. The women soldiers, she said, were always on close watch while she talked with her daughters.

She also related that the soldiers on duty would answer almost all her questions addressed to Fatima, and that her daughter would look at the soldier with every word she spoke. Mrs. Gumanoy saw how the military intimidated the girl to frighten her. Intense psychological pressure and intimidation by the military were also apparent when Rose Ann was surfaced at an AFP-sponsored press conference where she announced that she and her sister were not abducted by the military. Fatima was also compelled to state before a court hearing a habeas corpus plea filed by Mrs. Gumanoy that she voluntarily went with the military and that she was not being held against her will at the hospital. Fatima explained that she did not want to leave with her mother just yet because she could not leave her elder sister who was still with the military and purportedly recuperating in a hospital. Rose Ann was evidently being held hostage by the military so the latter could coerce her younger sister to do as they please.

Mrs. Gumanoy believes that the military has been manipulating her daughters to conceal the fact that the two girls were forcibly taken. She added that she could sense the intense torture and pressure her daughters were suffering under mil-

itary custody. When she asked them pointblank if they were indeed abducted or not, the two girls could only reply, "Later, Mother."

Human rights groups asserted that the AFP should immediately free Fatima and remand her to her mother's care because aside from being a minor, she has not been charged with any crime. Transferring custody to her mother would even be more urgent if she is indeed ill, they added. There is likewise no legal basis for the military to keep Rose Ann because she has already been released on bail. Her physical condition also warrants that she be put under her mother and family's direct care.

Neither has the AFP the moral authority to insist on taking care of the Gumanoy sisters as the military has continually harassed the family. Besides, the Gumanoy family has yet to recover from the pain inflicted by Ka Eddie's brutal death in the hands of the AFP.

The AFP's kidnapping and detention of the Gumanoy sisters forms part of the military's continuing repression of the family that started even before their father was assassinated. Ever since Ka Eddie became active in the militant peasant movement in Southern Tagalog, the military has relentlessly threatened members of his family, forcing them to transfer from one place to another just to escape harassment.

This particular violation of children's rights perpetrated by the AFP is nothing new. The military has been known to manipulate, abuse and brutalize children to put pressure on their parents, other family members and progressives within the community. These fascist practices by the AFP and the reactionary state are gross violations of human rights and children's rights. **AB**



G8 Agenda

Intensified exploitation of the world's peoples

For the peoples of the world, the recently held Group of 8 (G8) Summit in Hokkaido, Japan on July 7-9 is worthless. The summit only concealed the culpability of the imperialist countries for the current world economic crisis, continually worsening environmental problems and widespread hunger and disease in Africa.

The summit was attended by representatives from the US, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Canada and Russia. The European Union also participated in the meeting as the ninth member. China and India, dubbed as "emerging economies," were also invited to the summit along with representatives of some countries in Africa.

According to Prof. Jose Maria Sison, chairperson of the ILPS International Coordinating Committee, the G8 has not been held accountable for its main responsibility for the sufferings of peoples across the globe. The summit only served to intensify imperialist globalization policies and accelerate the crisis of global capitalism. Not one among the summit participants openly held the US to account for the high cost of its wars of aggression waged in the name of anti-terrorism. The real objective of the G8 is to expand the domination of its members and further amass superprofits to the detriment of the proletariat and peoples of the world.

The G8 Summit was nothing but a grand stage performance for the world audience. One of the items in its agenda was to find "solutions" to global warming and environ-

mental damage, but it never pointed to the big imperialist countries as primarily accountable for massive environmental destruction. In the end, the summit could only issue empty promises and did not even oblige countries to draw up measures that would ensure the realization of their targets.

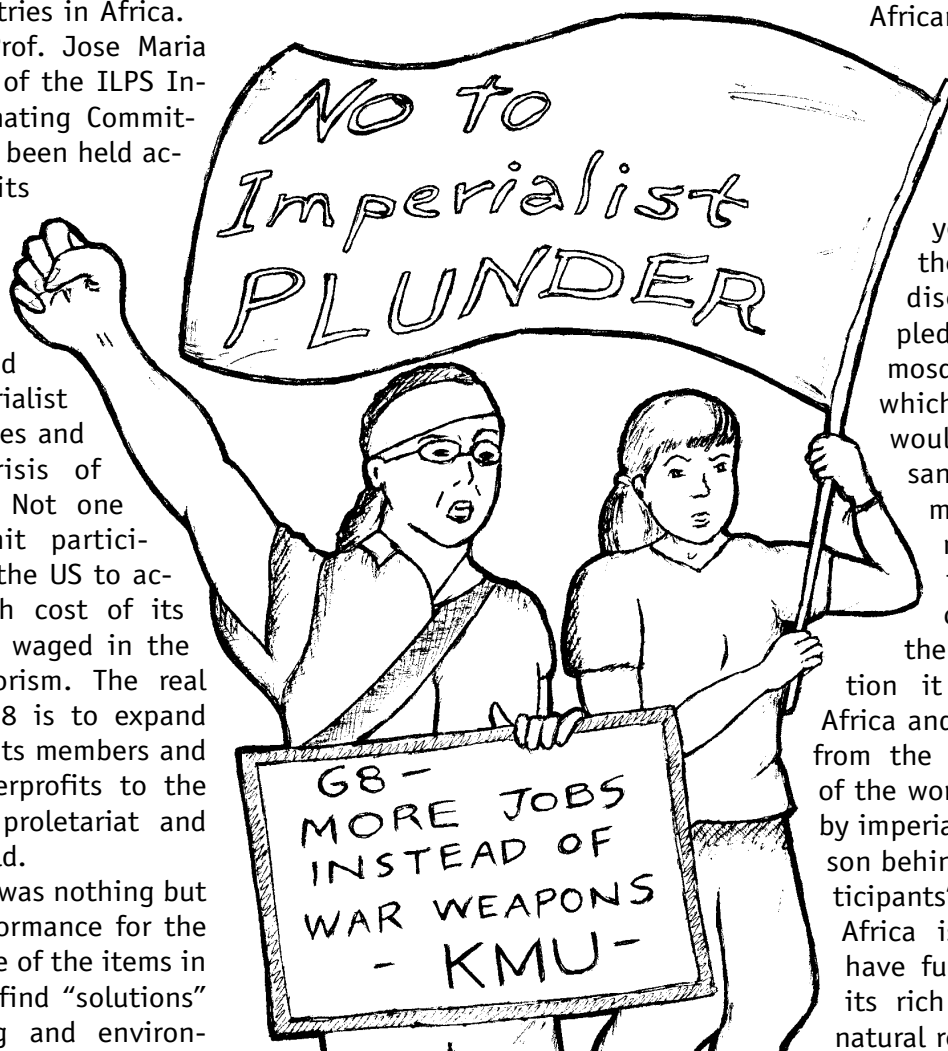
The G8 failed to come up with meaningful solutions to the world economic crisis, worsening scarcity and soaring food prices. The G8 summit participants simply called on nations with adequate food stocks to release some of their reserves to help others cope with rising prices and said it was "imperative" for these countries to remove export restrictions.

They called for an increase in oil production and refining capacities to help curtail record high crude prices. This conceals the fact that the problem does not lie with supply but in the price manipulation perpetrated by oil cartels and big finance capitalists in their constant drive to make superprofits.

The plans drawn up to assist

African countries were also useless.

The summit participants committed \$60 billion over a five-year period to help the continent fight disease, including pledging 100 million mosquito nets by 2010 which officials hoped would prevent thousands of deaths from malaria. The G8 made a vain attempt to mask its culpability over the massive destruction it has wrought in Africa and deflect attention from the underdevelopment of the world at large caused by imperialism. The real reason behind the summit participants' acute interest in Africa is their desire to have further control over its rich oil deposits and natural resources.





Activists assail and stage protests against the G8

Even before the actual G8 Summit began in Hokkaido, Japan on July 7, large-scale protest actions had already been launched in the country.

A week before the summit, Japanese and international activists had set up protest camps near the summit venue in Sapporo, the capital of Hokkaido.

July 4. Some 400 students, local activists, academics and Ainu (a marginalized national minority group in Hokkaido), and foreign activists from the US, Canada and other countries trooped to the streets to criticize the G8 for its primary responsibility for environmental destruction and global warming. A picket was also launched in front of the Japanese embassy in London, UK in solidarity with the protests in Japan.

About 5,000 Japanese and international activists marched in the streets of Sapporo, while another 1,000 protesters gathered in a nearby park. They demanded that the G8 take urgent action against pressing issues such as worsening climate change and world poverty. The police arrested three activists and a journalist. They also broke the window pane of a truck that joined the demonstration. These police attacks elicited numerous denunciations from activists in Japan and overseas. In Germany, protesters assailed the arrests by staging a rally in front of the Japanese embassy in Berlin.

About a hundred farmers and fisherfolk staged simultaneous protest rallies at the Sapporo central park. They urged the G8 to pay attention to the sufferings of direct food producers. The demon-

stration was joined by campaigners for Oxfam International, a funding agency, who said that global warming is connected to the issue of the devastating spikes in food prices.

Meanwhile, over 20 South Koreans who were to join the protests were stopped by Japanese authorities at the airport and eventually deported. A number of workers, who came all the way from Osaka, Japan, were also blocked by the police.

July 6. More than 20,000 policemen secured Hokkaido and declared a no-fly zone over the northern part of the island. It had been days since protest activities had been going on in the area, tackling the issues of labor rights, world hunger and other similar concerns. Among the protesters were representatives from the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN), who said they were constantly tailed and questioned at length by the police.

The protest actions were colorful and creative, marked with singing and music and short cultural performances, with activists wearing their traditional costumes, and some protesters wearing masks of G8 leaders.

July 7. Ainu led a march of about 1,000 activists in Lake Toya, Hokkai-

do. Meanwhile, unfazed by the pouring rain, about 50 activists marched some 10 kilometers from Shinrin Park towards Okishi in the same area. The simultaneous protest rallies continued until July 9. Overseas, activists sustained their solidarity actions and condemnation of repression by Japanese policemen.

The police escorted almost all of the protest marches in Japan to prevent the protesters from nearing the summit venue. Supported by the military, the police sustained its intimidation and harassment of activists. The Japanese government even used four fighter jets and 12 warships to "protect" the G8 leaders. AB





Fisherfolk in Japan stage strike against soaring oil prices

More than 400,000 fisherfolk in Japan staged a massive strike on July 15 to protest steep oil price hikes. Simultaneously, about 3,000 fisherfolk took to the streets in downtown Tokyo. An estimated 200,000 boards and trawlers stopped fishing that day in protest. The fisherfolk strongly opposed rapid increases in the prices of petroleum products and assailed the government's inaction over their grievances. As in other countries, the regime of Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda merely promised to look into their plight and see how they can be helped.

Earlier in June, fisherfolk in Japan had already staged a massive strike, condemning the empty promises of government officials such as the allocation of ¥10 billion (\$96 million or ₱4 billion) to look for ways to conserve energy among sectors severely affected by

upwardly spiraling oil prices. The mass actions in Japan were part of a wave of protests staged by fisherfolk worldwide. Japan is an archipelago where fishing is one of the major industries.

In Belgium, fisherfolk, mostly from France and Italy, marched to-

wards the European Union headquarters on June 4 to protest incessant gasoline price increases and urgently demanded an oil price reduction of 50%. The protest rally was launched to coincide with the European Parliament meeting.

On May 30, a widespread protest rally was conducted by fisherfolk from Spain, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, The Netherlands, Greece and Scotland. In Spain, which has the biggest fisherfolk population in Europe, the entire sector joined the strike, demanding a reduction in oil prices from the government. They gave away tons of fish in Madrid to demonstrate that it was better to give away their catch for free catch instead of suffering severe bankruptcies stemming from high production costs. In Italy, a similar protest was launched where fisherfolk closed down ports. Portugal, on the other hand, led a protest rally in support of the call to denounce escalating crude oil prices.

In Britain, fisherfolk trooped to the streets to air their vehement opposition to rising oil prices and demand immediate support for the industry. The demonstration was launched close on the heels of a widespread transport strike on May 28 staged by truck drivers who barricaded the streets with their trucks.

Meanwhile, on July 10, a one-day nationwide strike was launched by a large workers' union in Peru, the Confederación General de Trabajadores del Perú or CFTP. The protesters assailed the antipeople economic policies of Pres. Alan Garcia's regime and rapidly rising oil prices. The demonstration was violently dispersed as police forces truncheoned and tear gassed protesters and arrested more than 200 strikers.

AB



Maoist communes in Nepal

This article was adapted from The Red Star, a national magazine published by the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist.

There are four full-fledged communes operating at present in Nepal. They were established by the people under the direct leadership of the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist. Two of these communes are located in the Rolpa district that served as a forefront of the Maoists' struggle for over 10 years.

The biggest among the four communes is Ajambari, located in Thawang, Rolpa. It was built after villagers were forced to flee their communities due to intense militarization by the Royal Nepal Army (RNA) forces. After Red fighters of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) victoriously thwarted the RNA, the villagers established the communes to strengthen their community.

The second commune is located in Jaljala, Rolpa. The third commune called "Juni" was formed

in 1998 in Jajarkot district in western Nepal. It was established with the goal of protecting the welfare of families victimized by militarization, massacres and other human rights abuses perpetrated by the toppled monarchy. The fourth commune is in Balidum, Rukum district. These areas are bastions of the PLA.

Every community member actively participates in the production work of the communes, even as they strive to address all the needs of its members. With the

help of the Red guerrillas, schools, hospitals, banks and other social service institutions have already been built. Other communes, on the other hand, have seen the rise of hotels and restaurants.

Adult commune members work in the farms, with some assigned to care for children and the elderly. Centralized production is employed to ensure proper and sufficient distribution among commune members, especially in the face of the global food and oil crisis. Additionally, as testament to the communes' successful operations, they can now produce their own soap, confectionery, shoes, biscuits and pashmina shawls.

Members of the commune come from different sectors and social classes. People from various national minorities and castes live in freedom and democracy. Equal rights are enjoyed by both men and women, a remarkable leap from the backward practices of the feudal system. Old traditions and superstitions—remnants of the old system—are gradually being eliminated.

Apart from the four full-blown communes in Nepal today, there also exist over 50 cooperative communes in the country.

The commune system's superiority over the old feudal system in the field of production and distribution of the fruits of production has been proven in years of existence. Centralized production has resulted in increased production for the community. Each member enjoys access to the commune's resources, with the efficient distribution of the fruits of the members' collective labor. It is evident that the living standards of the people have been vastly improved under the commune system. **AB**

Arroyo's popularity plunges to new depths

GLORIA Arroyo's popularity has taken another nosedive. A recent survey by the Social Weather Stations (SWS) revealed that 60% of Filipinos are dissatisfied by Arroyo's performance. The figure is lower than that of a previous SWS survey in March showing that 54% were disappointed with her governance.

All income strata, from the lowest to the middle and ruling classes were dissatisfied with Arroyo. The same survey results were seen in various regions across the country, both in the countryside and cities. Arroyo has emerged as the most unpopular president since 1986.

According to Sen. Aquilino Pi-

mentel, an Arroyo critic, the survey only mirrors the people's anger over the Arroyo government's incompetence, bad governance, corruption and its continuing failure to address extrajudicial killings and disappearances in the country.

Conducted from June 27 to 30, the survey had a base of 1,200 respondents in Metro Manila and various provinces in Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao.

Oil firms hide extent of superprofits-Ibon

LOCAL subsidiaries of giant oil firms purposely hide their superprofits from the public, according to a recent study conducted by IBON Foundation. IBON disclosed that only P10.5 billion has been reported as combined profits in 2007 of local subsidiaries of Royal Dutch Shell, Chevron and Aramco. In contrast, their mother companies' financial reports reveal that they actually earned a whopping \$62 billion (or P3.1 trillion at an exchange rate of P50:\$1) in profits.

Pilipinas Shell reported a P4.12 billion net profit last year, while its mother company Royal Dutch Shell declared a profit of \$27.6 billion (or P1.38 trillion) from its Philippine subsidiary. Chevron Philippines reported only P2.75 billion in profits while Chevron stated that its local unit in the country earned \$18.7 billion (or P935 billion). Aramco, former owner of Petron, said its local company earned about \$15 billion (or P750 billion) while Petron only declared a profit of P5.94 billion.

The local subsidiaries, the IBON study disclosed, purposely understate their superprofits in order to evade taxes and have a pretext to continue with their oil price hikes. Their mother companies overseas, meanwhile, report the real incomes of their local companies to enhance the value of their stocks.

Meanwhile, oil companies imposed another round of increases on July 19, slapping an additional P3 per liter on the prices of diesel and kerosene and P1 on gasoline and other products. It was the 20th increase and the biggest hike so far in the prices of fuel products.

This recent massive hike in oil prices turned out to be a huge gimmick as the oil firms reportedly agreed to roll

back prices by P1.50 allegedly after an appeal by Gloria Arroyo. Arroyo deliberately tried to come up looking like a superstar while the oil companies managed to obscure the fact that they had actually hiked diesel prices by P1.50 per liter.

200,000 sacks of rice rotting in NFA warehouses

BAGONG Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN)-Panay picketed the National Food Authority (NFA) in Iloilo City on July 15 to assail NFA-Region VI officials for their utter neglect regarding thousands of sacks of rice already rotting in NFA warehouses.

A leader of PAMANGGAS, a peasant organization under BAYAN, said that while the people suffer from hunger due to steep rice prices, the NFA tolerates the spoilage of some 200,000 sacks of rice (worth P182.5 million at P18.25 per kilo) in its warehouse in Quintin Salas, Jaro.

Rice prices are steepest in areas severely devastated by typhoon "Frank." Worse, NFA rice is nowhere to be found in the market. Reports reveal that a kilo of rice now costs up to P70 while a *salop* (a local rice measurement equivalent to more than two kilos) of commercial rice costs as much as P150 in Aklan.